

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful examination of the present case, and present the following remarks in response. In the present response, claim 8 is amended. Claims 1-13 are pending, and claims 14-15 are canceled. No new matter is added.

Restriction/Election

The Office Action indicated that a written restriction is required between claims 1-13, directed to a patch panel, and claims 14 and 15, directed to a method of patching telecommunications cable. Applicants hereby confirm the telephone conversation of December 16, 2005, in which an Attorney of Record for Applicants elected claims 1-13 without traverse. Claims 14 and 15 are therefore canceled herein. Applicants reserve the right to pursue these or similar method claims in a divisional application.

Double Patenting

The Office Action provisionally rejected claims 1-7 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application No. 10/871,698. Applicants respectfully traverse this provisional rejection, and defer action until one of the pending applications issues. Applicants note that both applications are currently pending, and that until one of the two applications issues it is unclear that the claims in both applications will remain in the current form. Applicants wish to determine upon issuance of one of the pending applications whether a terminal disclaimer is still appropriate in light of the claims in both applications at that time.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Jennison (U.S. Patent No. 6,535,602). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants note that independent claim 1 requires "a plurality of interconnect locations mounted to the front major surface of the back plane, each interconnect location defining a card

edge socket with normally connected contact pairs connected to the back plane." Applicants assert that Jennison fails to disclose at least this element.

Jennison does not disclose a card edge socket with normally connected contact pairs. Rather, the card edge sockets of Jennison show contacts that are in a disconnected state. Jennison discloses a telecommunications wiring device having a punch down connector (element 2 in Figures 1a-1b of Jennison) and a plurality of punch down blocks (element 4 in Figures 1a-1b of Jennison). Applicants note that the punch down connector is connected to a punch down block by inserting a jumper into one of the card edge sockets (element 3 in Figures 1a-1b of Jennison). Jennison states "incoming wires are routed on the circuit board to the contacts on one side of any number of twenty-four pin edge connectors. . .[and] the contacts on the opposite side are routed on the circuit board to a wire terminating device." col. 3, lines 20-34. Jennison indicates that "routing of incoming telephone or data lines to a given location is accomplished by placing a jumper containing a unique wiring configuration into the edge card connector." col. 3, lines 43-45. Therefore, the edge card connectors of Jennison, seen in Figures 2a-e, are in fact all normally disconnected, and are connected only by insertion of an edge connector jumper, such as those with the wiring configurations shown in Figures 6a-f. Because Jennison requires jumpers for connecting the punch down connector 2 to any punch down block 4, it cannot anticipate claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants assert that claim 1 is not anticipated by Jennison. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1. Similarly, claim 2 is dependent upon claim 1 and inherits all of the features claimed therein. Applicants assert that claim 2 is not anticipated by Jennison for at least the same reasons, and respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 5-9, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jennison in view of Carlson et al. (U.S. Reissue Patent No. RE37,125). The Office Action rejected claims 3, 4, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jennison in view of both Carlson et al. and Curry et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,053,764). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections as well.

Claims 3-7 are dependent upon independent claim 1, and as such, inherit all claim limitations therefrom. These claims therefore include a card edge socket with normally connected contact pairs. Claim 8 is amended herein to include normally connected contact pairs at the interconnect locations as well. Claims 9-13 are dependent upon claim 8, and inherit this element. As explained above, Jennison does not disclose any normally connected pairs. Applicants further assert that Jennison is not combinable with either Carlson et al. or Curry et al. to teach or suggest this feature.

As explained above, Applicants note that Jennison fails to disclose normally connected contact pairs. Applicants further note that the key operational principle of Jennison hinges on connecting the normally disconnected card edge sockets with specially wired jumpers. Jennison states, "the present invention solves this problem [of confusing wiring in telephone and data systems] by connecting edge card connectors to punch down blocks or other wire terminating devices that are permanently connected to incoming and outgoing phone lines in a unique way by the use of jumpers that eliminate the need for rewiring when changing or re-routing multiple phone lines." col. 1, lines 25-30. Jennison also explicitly indicates that the normally open card edge sockets are important to that reference, stating "[A] significant feature that the invention provides is for convenient isolation of the internal telecommunication network from the service provider network. When no jumper cards are plugged into the edge connectors, there is a physical break between the internal network and the service provider network." col. 4 lines 23-28. Jumper interconnections between the punch down blocks and punch down connector in Jennison would be useless if the edge card sockets were normally connected, because (1) the jumper would have no function, eliminating the "significant feature" of the invention, and (2) manual rewiring would again be needed, eliminating the primary advantage of Jennison. Therefore, Jennison teaches away from including any normally connected pairs, and is not combinable with any reference teaching normally connected pairs.

Because Jennison is not combinable with another reference to teach a card edge connector with normally connected pairs, claims 3-13 are not obvious in view of Jennison, Curry et al., and Carlson et al. Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims.

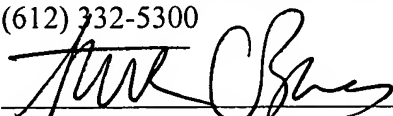
Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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